



Employee Well-being in the Middle East

Strategies to Improve Employee Health
and Well-being in Your Organization

In a 2022 survey conducted by the McKinsey Health Institute, which involved more than four thousand employees in four GCC countries (Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar), it was found that

Over 60% of respondents had experienced mental, physical, and well-being challenges at some point in their lives.

Mental and physical health, as well as overall well-being, were closely linked, with 66% of GCC respondents reporting at least one mental-health challenge, slightly exceeding global averages.

Addressing poor employee well-being and mental health is a complex issue, influenced by numerous factors.

In this guide, we outline three key strategies to increase employee well-being for better business outcomes.

Contents

Develop a Culture of Psychological Safety 3

Leaders role: How to lead for well-being 6

Set and Enforce Clear Work-Life Boundaries 8



1. Develop a Culture of Psychological Safety

One of the ways organizations can protect well-being and mental health is by building a culture of [psychological safety](#). When people feel this kind of safety, they believe they can speak up in the workplace without risk of punishment or humiliation.

Here are a few ways your organization can build a safe space for a winning culture that supports effective teamwork and strong performance.



Cultivate inclusivity.

Inclusivity and psychological safety go hand-in-hand. When everyone feels included, they're more likely to share their ideas and feedback without fear. Creating an inclusive work environment requires acknowledging and confronting bias, seeking out different perspectives, and creating safe spaces where everyone feels they belong.

Leaders play a pivotal role in creating an inclusive environment where employees feel safe to share thoughts, ideas, and challenges. This inclusivity is a cornerstone of thriving and contributes significantly to employee well-being. A positive workplace experience, guided by inclusive leaders, leads to higher performance, better decisions, and increased collaboration.

When leaders choose inclusion in their daily interactions, a culture develops where people feel seen, valued and understood. It becomes safe to share the new idea or take the risk that leads to breakthrough results for your organization.

Create a safe space to fail.

When leaders normalize risk-taking, an organization becomes a place where people have the space to try, fail, and try again. This type of environment enables team members to innovate by making them feel secure in taking risks.

Building a more inclusive team can take a while, but it's doable when you provide a safe space for discussion, encourage honesty, and involve everyone.





Focus on only a few specific behaviors at a time, and you can create a team culture where everyone feels like they belong.

Democratize ideas and feedback.

Guidance from leadership is part of every organization. However, effective leaders know their role isn't to be “the fixer” but to **unleash potential in others** by making space for ideas and constructive feedback to flow freely from every part of their team.

You simply need to be a leader who remains open to ideas without dismissing them. You can ask people to check your assumptions. You can say, ‘Let's hear everybody's ideas. We aren't going to criticize any of them.’”

When leaders model this type of behavior, organizations are set up to build company-wide feedback mechanisms where everyone can share new ideas and areas for improvement. As a result, people feel psychologically safe and organizations reap the benefit of more diverse perspectives.



2. Leaders' role: How to lead for well-being

Use Influence Positively and Address Challenges

Various factors can significantly influence employees' mental health and well-being. Personal issues, such as family problems, financial stress, or health concerns. Work-related factors like excessive workload, job insecurity. External influences including political turmoil, economic uncertainty, or natural disasters in home countries.

As a leader, when challenges or stressful situations arise, address them promptly and constructively. By taking proactive steps, employees will feel a sense of belonging and positive affiliation, knowing their well-being is a genuine concern.

Did you know?

70% of individuals believe their leaders have a substantial influence on their mental well-being. This influence can be either positive or negative, and it's equal to the impact of their spouse. - The Workforce Institute at UKG





Promote Work-Life Balance.

Encourage employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life. Implement flexible schedules or remote work options, and set an example by prioritizing your own work-life balance.

Provide Resources and Support.

Offer mental health and well-being resources and support programs, or counseling services. Create an open environment where employees feel comfortable seeking help when needed.

Recognize and Appreciate.

Acknowledge and appreciate employees' efforts and accomplishments. Regular recognition and feedback can boost morale and contribute to a positive workplace atmosphere, improving overall well-being



3. Set (*and Enforce*) Clear Work-Life Boundaries

Organizational culture sets the tone for how employees view work-life balance and manage their time personally and professionally. The attitudes and practices leaders have about these important elements of the workplace are part of the fabric of workplace health. While defining and modeling work-life balance is challenging in practice, it's an important component of a winning culture where people stay intellectually and emotionally invested in the work they're doing.

Achieving work-life balance isn't a simple one-time solution, whether on an individual or organizational scale, but there are some steps leaders can take to help their people accomplish their most important goals without neglecting their personal relationships and commitments.



-
- Provide employees time and resources for physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual self-renewal. This can include time-off policies, flexible work setups, and company-sponsored renewal programs.
 - Help your people [act on what's most important](#) instead of reacting to the urgent. This can include setting clear priorities as a team, aligning communication and meeting norms to maximize focus time, and adopting technology that helps people collaborate efficiently.
 - [Define clear goals](#) and activities that support them so people are empowered to prioritize mission-critical work and defer (or decline) lower-value tasks.
 - Model healthy boundary-setting—whether it's turning off your business email notifications after work, not responding to emails on the weekend, or taking regular time off to recharge—so others can follow your example.

Boundaries are not barriers; instead, they are guidelines that foster clarity, define roles, ensure balance, and boost productivity.





Recharge

Your Leaders

Your Teams

Your Culture

Your Results



Recharge Your Leaders and Teams With the All Access Pass

FranklinCovey partners with your organization to achieve results that require collective behavior change. When everyone changes together, communication improves, collaboration flourishes, and breakthroughs happen. Together, we can solve your organization's most pressing problems and help your teams achieve outstanding results.

With the FranklinCovey All Access Pass®, you have access to all the resources you need to expand your reach, improve performance, and energize your people.

For more information contact us today at info@franklincoveyme.com or drop us a Whatsapp message at +971 4 332 2244